

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 AID-05
ACDA-07 TRSE-00 OMB-01 IGA-02 /067 W
-----151911Z 079682 /42

R 151603Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY LISBON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1761
INFO USIA WASHDC
AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA
COMUSFORAZ LAJES ILHA TERCEIRA
OASD WASHDC/PA
OSAF WASHDC/OIP
HQ MAC SCOTT AFB IL/OIP
CINCLANT NORFOLK VA/PAO
11 AF MC GUIRE AFB NJ/CS

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 LISBON 4617

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SOPN, PO, US
SUBJECT: AZORES BASE NEGOTIATIONS; LAJES WORKERS DEMANDS

REF: COMUSFORAZ 311150Z MAY 77

1. WEEKLY PRO-PSD NEWSPAPER "EXPRESSO" OF JUNE 8 PUBLISHED
PAGE 4 ARTICLE BASED ON BG WIGLEY INTERVIEW (REFTEL). DESPITE
SENSATIONAL, MISLEADING HEADLINE, ARTICLE IS BASICALLY SOUND
AND APPEARS TO QUOTE WIGLEY CORRECTLY.

2. HERewith INFORMAL TRANSLATION OF ARTICLE, WHICH WAS
HEADLINED, "LAJES BASE WORKERS IGNORED IN AGREEMENTS":
(BEGIN TEXT)

(A) PORTUGAL MORE THAN THE UNITED STATES IS RESPONSIBLE FOR
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THE UNFAVORABLE SITUATION IN WHICH ARE FOUND THE 1,500
WORKERS EMPLOYED IN THE AMERICAN PORTION OF LAJES AIR
BASE. AS FAR AS IS KNOWN, NOTHING IS IN THE TWO-PARTY
AGREEMENT TO PROTECT THE PORTUGUESE WORKERS' INTERESTS.
THE LABOR UNIONS HAVE NO ACCESS TO THE (BASE) NEGOTIATIONS,
WHICH ARE UNDER WAY AT LEAST IN A PRELIMINARY FORM.

(B) IN RECENT WEEKS THE UNIONS ON TERCEIRA ISLAND HAVE CARRIED OUT A CAMPAIGN DESIGNED BASICALLY TO ALERT THE AUTHORITIES, ON A REGIONAL AS WELL AS CENTRAL GOVERNMENT LEVEL, WHO WILL NEGOTIATE THE NEW AGREEMENT. THE LABOR SECTOR'S DEMANDS CENTER ON THE NEED TO AGREE UPON AN IMPROVEMENT IN SALARIES AND REPRESENTATION BY THE WORKERS IN AREAS OF INTEREST TO THEM.

(C) THERE HAVE BEEN SEVERAL EFFORTS TO PRESSURE THE AMERICAN COMMANDER TO GIVE THE RIGHTS MENTIONED. A CONTACT WITH GENERAL WIGLEY REGARDING THIS SITUATION CONFIRMED THAT THE AMERICAN POSITION IS BASED ON CONTRACTUAL ASPECTS WHICH, AS IS KNOWN, HAVE BEEN SUBJECT TO SUCCESSIVE EXTENSIONS. GENERAL WIGLEY SAID THAT "AS FOR THE SALARY ISSUE, SALARIES MUST BE PAID WHICH ARE EQUIVALENT TO THOSE PREVAILING IN THE REGION, NOT GOING MUCH BEYOND THE LOCAL SALARY LEVELS -- IT NOT BEING IN THE COMPETENCE OF THE AMERICAN COMMANDER TO CONTROL THE ARCHIPELAGO'S ECONOMY." GENERAL WIGLEY ADDED THAT HIS STAFF "RESOLVES THE PROBLEM OF SALARIES AND HOLIDAYS THROUGH A SURVEY ABOUT SALARIES AND BENEFITS," SAYING THAT THIS IS DONE THROUGH CONSULTING SEVERAL EMPLOYERS WHO USE SIMILAR SERVICES FOR WHICH THE AMERICAN BASE HIRES PORTUGUESE WORKERS.

(D) THE WORKERS HAVE A CONSULTATIVE ASSEMBLY WHICH REPRESENTS THEM BEFORE THE AMERICAN AUTHORITIES AND THE PORTUGUESE COMMAND. STILL, THE LOCAL UNIONS HAVE NO MEANS OF INTERVENING IN ANY PART OF THE NEGOTIATIONS CURRENTLY IN PROCESS. THE SALARY CHANGES WHICH THE AMERICAN COMMAND ENVISIONS WILL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BE BASED ON A NEW REVIEW BEING CONDUCTED WITH 28 DIFFERENT FIRMS WHICH HAVE EMPLOYEES OF THE DIFFERENT KINDS WHO WORK ON THE AIR BASE. THE AMERICAN EXPERTS WERE GIVEN A WEEK TO STUDY THE SALARY LEVELS PAID IN THE AZORES ARCHIPELAGO.

(E) (SUBTITLE) THE AZORES ARE IMPORTANT TO THE AMERICANS "EXPRESSO," KNOWING THAT THE AMERICAN SIDE HAD SHOWN ITSELF EXTREMELY DEMANDING IN THE PRELIMINARY ENCOUNTER FOR NEGOTIATING NEW ACCORDS ABOUT THE USE OF LAJES, ASKED GENERAL WIGLEY HOW HE WOULD TERM IMPORTANCE OF THE AZORES TO HIS COUNTRY. THE AMERICAN COMMANDER STATED THAT

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NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 AID-05
ACDA-07 TRSE-00 OMB-01 IGA-02 /067 W
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R 151603Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY LISBON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1762
INFO USIA WASHDC
AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA
COMUSFORAZ LAJES ILHA TERCEIRA
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"THE AZORES ARE STRATEGICALLY IMPORTANT FOR THE FREE
WORLD BECAUSE OF THEIR LOCATION IN THE MIDDLE OF THE
ATLANTIC."

"I FREQUENTLY TELL VISITORS THAT THE AZORES ARE STILL
VERY IMPORTANT TODAY EVEN THOUGH THEY CANNOT BE CON-
SIDERED INDISPENSABLE WITH THE TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCES
OF THE LARGE TRANSPORT PLANES".

(F) MEANWHILE, THE IMPORTANCE AND INTEREST OF THE ARCHIPELAGO
HAVE BEEN REINFORCED BY FRANCE WHICH HAS A MISSILE TRACKING
STATION ON FLORES ISLAND. THE LAJES BASE, BESIDES BEING
A REFUELING AND SUPPORT BASE FOR SEARCH AND ANTI-SUBMARINE
SQUADRONS, ALSO IS AN IMPORTANT COMMUNICATIONS SITE.
(END TEXT)

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3. COMMENT: QUESTION OF LABOR CONTRACT BETWEEN BASE AND
LOCAL EMPLOYEES REMAINS A DIFFICULT AND THORNY MATTER.
SINCE IT IS A READILY EXPLOITABLE ISSUE, IT OFFERS THE
COMMUNISTS AND FAR LEFT AN OPENING IN THE OTHERWISE HOSTILE
AZOREAN ENVIRONMENT.
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